

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
MID-PACIFIC REGION
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Second Community Drinking Water Well
Table Bluff Reservation – Wiyot Tribe**

FONSI No. _____

Recommended by:

Shelly Hatleberg
Natural Resource Specialist
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: _____

Concurred by:

Tracy Slavin
Program Manager
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: _____

Approved by:

Richard Woodley
Regional Resources Manager
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: _____

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Second Community Drinking Water Well Table Bluff Reservation – Wiyot Tribe

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval and associated funding for the construction of a second community drinking water well on the Wiyot Tribe's Table Bluff Reservation is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required.

BACKGROUND

Under the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, as amended (Drought Act), and other authorities, Reclamation is planning to use \$40 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to fund emergency drought relief projects that can quickly and effectively mitigate the consequences of the current drought in California.

2009 was the third consecutive year of drought conditions in the State of California and Governor Schwarzenegger declared a drought emergency for the entire state. The Wiyot Tribe (Tribe) is suffering from the prolonged drought which has resulted in severe effects to the health and safety of tribal members. In compliance with Section 104 of the Drought Act, the Tribe has declared a drought emergency and requested Reclamation's assistance for the purpose of installing a second community drinking water well on the Table Bluff Reservation (Reservation) in Northern California.

In response to the Tribe's request for assistance, Reclamation proposes to provide ARRA funding for the installation of a second community drinking well on the Reservation. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide an alternative source of drinking water for the Tribe and to reduce the health risks associated with their current operation. The Tribe needs a second well on the Reservation for several reasons: (1) the Tribe wishes to create redundancy in its water system for cautionary purposes; (2) presently, the production rate of the existing well should be adequate for the community it serves, but may be inadequate should the community grow; (3) the Tribe wishes to eventually abandon the existing well at the old Reservation, but cannot do so until an alternate backup water source is developed; and (4) having all wells on the Reservation increases the reliability and security of the Tribe's water system.

FINDINGS

Reclamation has prepared an EA (see attached) which analyzes the impacts of the Proposed Action. Based on the analysis in the EA, Reclamation has found that the construction of a second community drinking water well on the Reservation would not result in significant impacts to the environment and does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This Finding of No Significant Impact is based upon the following:

- 1. Surface Water Resources:** The Proposed Action would neither increase nor decrease surface water in the project area and, therefore, would not result in short-term or long-term adverse impacts to surface water or resources dependent on surface water. Surface water resources would not be overburdened as a result of the Proposed Action.
- 2. Groundwater Resources:** Groundwater resources are believed to be of good quality and quantity in the North Coast Hydrologic Area - Eel River Valley Groundwater Basin. The well would be managed and monitored by the Tribe to ensure water use efficiency and water conservation and would pump a minimal amount of water in the area, therefore; the Proposed Action would not result in short-term or long-term adverse impacts to groundwater resources.
- 3. Land Use:** Under the Proposed Action, the Tribe would drill a second drinking water well in an area that has previously been disturbed; therefore, the action would not be changing the historic land use. The Proposed Action does not conflict with any land use plans on the Reservation.
- 4. Biological Resources:** A species list was requested on November 17, 2009 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office pursuant to section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. There are no listed, proposed, or species of concern in the project area. Environmental specialists with the Tribe conducted a site assessment of the area and found no endangered or threatened species. Due to the Proposed Action area being previously disturbed, no wilderness designations or unique ecosystem, biological community or its inhabitants are expected to be impacted by the project. Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on special-status species or migratory bird species with the potential to occur in the project area of effect. Therefore, no further consultation is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.
- 5. Cultural Resources:** The Proposed Action is the type of activity that has the potential to affect historic properties. A records search, pedestrian survey, and Tribal consultation failed to identify any historic properties within the project area. Since no historic properties will be affected, no cultural resources will be impacted as a result of implementing proposed action.
- 6. Indian Trust Assets:** The Proposed Action would not adversely affect any Indian Trust Assets (ITAs).

7. Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action would not disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations. In fact, the Proposed Action would address existing negative effects upon a minority population and improve the standard of living by providing clean water. The Proposed Action would not cause environmental justice issues.

8. Climate Change: The Proposed Action would not include any significant change on the composition of the atmosphere and therefore would not result in adverse impacts to climate change.

9. Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action is a minor construction activity, encompassing a total of 1.07 acres within a previously disturbed area. The Proposed Action would not result in adverse impacts to surface water, groundwater, land use, geology and soils, biological resources, cultural resources, ITAs, environmental justice or climate change and due to the fact that there are no additional projects planned on the Reservation at this time, the Proposed Action would not contribute to cumulative impacts to any of these resources.